

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 855

AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 170

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN-IRAQI RELATIONS

1. FOLLOWING VISIT OF 40 MEMBER ITALIAN ECONOMIC DELEGATION
HEADED BY ITALIAN MFA PERSONNEL, ITALIAN AMBASSADOR NUTI
REQUESTED MEETING WITH ME MARCH 22 TO DISCUSS ITALIAN BILATERAL
RELATIONS WITH IRAQ. HE SAID COMMUNISTS IN ITALY PUSHING
CLOSE COOPERATION WITH IRAQ AND LEFT CENTER ELEMENTS EQUALLY
FAVOR IT. HOWEVER, FPXMLS YGNRE" N E
" REASONS, NON-
COMMUNIST ELEMENTS DO NOT WISH TO PUSH COOPERATION WITH IRAQ
IF IT WOULD BE OPPOSED BY USG GIVEN U.S. OPPOSITION TO
BILATERAL DEALS WITH OIL PRODUCERS AND ANTI-U.S. POLICIES OF
IRAQ. DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS COULD THEREFORE
PREVENT NEW ITALIAN INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIP
WITH IRAQ WHICH ITALIAN MFA VERY MUCH WANTS.

2. WITH STRONG REQUEST THAT IT NOT BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO HIM
(OR RECENT VISITORS FROM MFA ROME), AMBASSADOR NUTI
SUGGESTED THAT A WORD FROM USG TO ITALIAN GOVERNMENT
THAT IT FAVORED STRENGTHENING OF IRAQI-ITALIAN RELATIONS
MIGHT BE VERY USEFUL. SUCH A STATEMENT COULD BE CONVEYED
FOR EXAMPLE TO ITALIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON.

3. COMMENT: IN STRICTLY IRAQI CONTEXT, IT IS CERTAINLY
IN WESTERN INTEREST THAT ITALY EXPAND RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

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PAGE 02 BAGHDA 00170 270901Z

SINCE GROWTH IN WESTERN PRESENCE IS TAKING PLACE AT EXPENSE

OF USSR AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. WHILE THERE IS PLENTY OF
CUT THROAT COMMERCIAL COMPETITION AMONG WESTERN COUNTRIES,
THERE SHOULD BE ROOM FOR ALL.

4. I REALIZE OF COURSE, THAT USG ENCOURAGEMENT FOR ITALIAN-
IRAQI DEALS MAY CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH OUR BROADER POLICIES IN
AREA. IF DEPARTMENT AND ROME BELIEVE IT IS WORTH DOING,
HOWEVER, BELIEVE DEPARTMENT COULD PUT IT IN CONTEXT OF
ENCOURAGING ITALY TO EXPAND ITS ALREADY GOOD POSITION IN
IRAQ TO ENSURE WEST IS RESPONSIVE TO TENTATIVE IRAQI STEPS
TOWARD FULL RAPPROCHEMENT WITH WEST AFTER SIX YEARS OF
SOVIET PREDOMINANCE (CITING AMONG OTHER THINGS FEB 28
RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH FRG AND EXPECTED EARLY RESUMPTION
WITH UK). DEPT COULD ALSO CITE U.S. EFFORTS TO EXPAND
OUR OWN COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH IRAQ. LOWRIE

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 1 AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED UPON REQUEST.

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